

A full-page photograph of actress Gillian Anderson. She is crouching low to the ground, wearing a dark navy blue suit and black strappy high-heeled sandals. She is looking upwards and to the left with a slight smile. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

# EAT, PREY, LOVE

Gillian Anderson on  
*Hannibal*, her return to  
*The X-Files* and her  
favorite role yet

BY MICHAEL SCHNEIDER



**G**illian Anderson has racked up quite a few frequent flier miles over the past two years. The actress—who kept a low profile for much of the 2000s after *The X-Files* ended—has been hopping between Chicago for NBC’s now-canceled *Crisis*; Ireland for BBC’s *The Fall* (available here on Netflix); Florence, Italy, for NBC’s *Hannibal*; and Eastern Europe for BBC’s *War and Peace* (which will air in 2016 on A&E, Lifetime and History). Currently, she’s in Vancouver shooting Fox’s *X-Files* revival.

“The fact that it’s all been able to fit in without too much death is a good thing,” she says with a laugh. “I’m still alive, even with the nine billion flights I had to take to make it possible. Last year, I did a play that I’ve wanted to do for 30 years—*A Streetcar Named Desire*—in London, and we’re taking it to New York soon. So it’s been very full and satisfying on my end.”

*Hannibal* creator Bryan Fuller, who calls Anderson his muse, says both he and the actress “bent over backward” to accommodate her schedule so she could become a regular on the NBC thriller. As a result, fans are learning more about the complex relationship between Anderson’s Dr. Bedelia Du Maurier and the devilish doc, Hannibal Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen). “We’ll find out how she came to be in Hannibal’s debt,” Fuller hints.

Although NBC isn’t bringing *Hannibal* back for a fourth season, Fuller is shopping the series around for a new home. “Hopefully, someone is cool enough to give it a second life,” Anderson says. If not, Fuller wants to cast the actress in his next project, Starz’s *American Gods*. “We have talked about staying in each other’s orbit after *Hannibal*,” Fuller explains. “She is a storyteller and I really value her sense of narrative.”

We spoke with Anderson about juggling it all.

#### How did your full-time gig on *Hannibal* happen?

I first signed on for a three-episode arc [in Season 1] and didn’t realize I would enjoy playing her and working with Bryan and Mads as much as I did. When Bryan suggested that we add more Bedelia this season, it was a wonderful opportunity to expand the character. I loved the premiere—just the idea of these two very complicated people jumping on a plane to Europe together, that itself makes for a beautifully, potentially romantic, terrifying novella.

**How much is Bedelia in control?** She and Hannibal are playing cat and mouse, and at varying times one of them is on top. She’s

terrified and realizes that she is in over her head. But she is also somewhat addicted to him and to the excitement of the world that he provides. As much as Bedelia may feel like she has a plan, that can turn in a split second. He can suddenly decide that he wants to eat her. [Laughs]

**She and Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) are in similar situations, and later this season, Will and Bedelia meet up.**

**What’s the dynamic between those two characters?** Their

scenes have a very different feel to them. There’s a chess game that Bedelia and Will are playing as well. They’re both after the same king. But they’re as enthralled by Hannibal as they ever have been. It’s almost as if they’re sharing a lover.

**What has it been like to return to *The X-Files*?**

Going back is wild. I have to pinch myself every day because it’s so strange seeing the same people—even some of the same crew are working on it. It’s almost like time has stopped. I haven’t quite figured my way into it yet.

**Was it difficult to revisit Dana Scully, a character you haven’t played in so long?**

It’s comfortable, but it’s more challenging than I expected to push the other characters out of the way. It’s really great to work with David [Duchovny] and [creator] Chris [Carter] again.

**When TV GUIDE MAGAZINE held an *X-Files* reunion at Comic-Con in 2013, you were a little hesitant about doing a TV reboot.** I was more than a little hesitant.

**You said it would not happen.**

**What changed your mind?**

I finally realized that there was no way we were ever going to do another film, and if we wanted some kind of closure, there was only one way it was going to happen. Chris and David convinced me that it wouldn’t be a horrible idea.

**And right after this, you film Season 3 of *The Fall* with Jamie Dornan.** *The Fall* is one of my favorite projects, and Stella is probably my favorite character I have ever

played. In the beginning, there was a battle when I was doing *Hannibal* and *Crisis*—nobody [at NBC] really wanted *The Fall* to happen. Somehow, what felt like the end of the world to certain [network executives] has become a bit more acceptable.

**Does it give you whiplash as a performer to tackle such wildly different roles?** Not that much. I have certain ways of delineating them. So far so good.

**HANNIBAL, Thursdays, 10/9c, NBC**



***Hannibal* psychiatrist Bedelia Du Maurier has a plan to protect herself from Lecter but “could end up having her throat slit,” warns Anderson (with Mikkelsen, top); with Duchovny in the original *X-Files***